

Lynwood Unified School District

Quest for Success

All schools in the Lynwood Unified School District will participate in the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant. The incentive program is designed to increase student achievement and teacher retention in difficult-to-staff positions. Additionally, the program offers incentives for taking on additional roles, such as grade-level chairperson. The program will foster collegiality among staff by awarding incentives based on grade-level or department-level gains in student achievement.

Needs Assessment Results and General Information

Lynwood Unified School District serves Lynwood, a city of 70,000 residents, located 15 miles south of downtown Los Angeles in Los Angeles County. The district has 905 teachers and 18,000 students. Ninety percent of the students are Latino, 8 percent are black, and 2 percent are of other races and ethnicities. Approximately 44 percent of the students are English learners. Almost 88 percent of them are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. As a district, Lynwood is in Program Improvement Year 1.

Background

The Quest for Success program will augment the district's plan to increase student achievement by offering incentives to teachers and principals for gains in student achievement. The system will also include financial incentives for leadership activities or taking on additional responsibilities. Another goal of the program is to recruit and retain teachers in difficult-to-staff positions, such as secondary math and science and special education.

Quest for Success is designed to foster collegiality among staff by making awards to all teachers in the grade level at an elementary school and all teachers at the core-subject department (secondary) level when targets are met.

Incentives

Incentives for principals and assistant principals will be based on school-wide achievement. For elementary-level teachers, incentives will be based on grade-level performance of students as well as on a school-wide measure. In a secondary school, teachers will receive incentive awards based on performance of students in core-subject departments—English language arts, math, science, social studies—as well as a school-wide measure. Each grade level has a specific indicator to determine eligibility for the award and a specific award amount. The indicators are tied to specific increases in student achievement test scores. The recruitment and retention incentives are also linked to specific indicators, including obtaining certification in specific areas, National Board Certification, and No Child Left Behind competencies.

LOCATION(S)	Lynwood, California
GRANT AMOUNT	Year 1: \$2,288,832 5-year total: \$11,842,328
DURATION	5 years
PARTNERS	None

Evaluation

An external evaluator will analyze the impact of the grant on students, teachers, administrators, and the schools. The evaluator will provide both formative and summative evaluations of the program. Progress in meeting the outcomes of the Quest for Success program will be provided, and feedback will be given on an ongoing basis. This will assist the district in making continuous improvements to the system. The evaluation will also allow for year-to-year comparisons of student achievement, teacher effectiveness, and principal professional standards.

Resources

The district will meet the cost-sharing requirement using Title I funds. It will fund 75 percent of the project by year 5.

Data Systems

Lynwood has two main data-management systems: Cruncher and the Online Assessment Reporting system databases, which are centralized data warehouses. Cruncher includes student demographics, enrollment, absences, courses, grades, testing information, free or reduced-price lunch status, and special programs.

The Online Assessment Reporting System captures the Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) district benchmark assessment results in a simple web interface. Administrators and teachers can analyze any subgroup's performance results on the SCOE test. The TerraNova CAT, which will be used to assess math for K-1, will be added to Cruncher for the TIF grant. For Quest for Success, Lynwood will contract with a consulting firm to design and implement a database to collect and report various data for the project. The database will capture the following: (1) twice-yearly evaluation results, (2) the hours of professional development for

each teacher to establish eligibility for the incentive program, and (3) the extra roles assumed by teachers to earn leadership incentive payments. Additionally, the database will link to the Cruncher data on student achievement for elementary grade-level or secondary core-subject test results.

Year 1 Activities

- Successfully paying off the leadership components of our project;
- Enhancing the awareness of teacher and principal quality through the incorporation of NSDC standards;
- Creating a communication plan that reflects the school community;
- Creating an opportunity for teacher leadership at all levels through a systems concept;
- Outlining the year at glance framework for site and central office administrators; and
- Updating the website to reflect year 1 forms and activities.

Outlook for Year 2

- To ensure a more feasible teacher and administration evaluation timeline for teacher observations;
- To increase the parent and community outreach component of our communication plan while building a stronger relationship with the incoming Lynwood teacher Association president;
- To continue aligning our evaluation plan to be more streamlined, IT focused, and aligned to national standards using the NSDC standards; and
- To make sure that Lynwood continues to meet all the Government Performance and Reporting Act requirements while exceeding the year's project goals.